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James F. Kenkel, Fire Marshal

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State Electrical Inspection Program Up and Running!

Des Moines, IOWA--- If you're thinking about remodeling that kitchen or adding on a family room, the State Fire Marshal's electrical inspectors are ready to help you make those renovations safely!

At the direction of the State Legislature and the Governor, the Office of the State Fire Marshal has been working since 2007 to develop and implement a statewide electrical licensure and inspection program. For more than a year now, all electricians in the state have been obtaining their professional licenses. With this success, the electrical inspection phase of the program was kicked off on March 1, 2009. The objective of the state electrical inspection program is to ensure safety through compliance with the National Electrical Code and through thorough inspections performed by trained inspectors.

For the average Iowan looking to make renovations on their home or business this will mean several things. First, find out if your local government performs electrical inspections. Political subdivisions such as cities and counties operating an inspection program prior to 2007, will maintain their current programs. Inspections in the remaining, non-inspected areas however, will now be conducted by a state electrical inspector assigned to your geographical area. Second, you'll need to find out if the work performed on your home or business requires a permit. Any electrical installation which requires a permit and inspection by the state electrical program, must be performed by an Iowa licensed electrician. Below are general guidelines to follow when deciding if you need a permit and a licensed electrician:

NEW CONSTRUCTION:

Electrical permits will be required for all new electrical installations including residential, commercial, and industrial in all areas of the state not currently under the jurisdiction of a political subdivision performing electrical inspections.

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION:

Electrical permits will be required for all new installations and alterations unless all of the following conditions apply: (1)The installation is under the direct supervision of a licensed electrician. (2)The installation does not in anyway



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involve work within a new or existing switch board or panel board. (3) The line-to-ground installation does not exceed 30 amperes. (4) The line-to-ground installation does not exceed 277 volts, single phase.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE:

Electrical permits will not be required for routine maintenance. *Routine Maintenance* has been defined as "the repair or replacement of existing electrical apparatus or equipment of the same size and type for which no changes in wiring are made."

Requests for electrical permits, fee payment, and requests for inspections may be made online at iowaelectrical.gov (note there is no "www" preceding the web address). Accommodations have been made for those people without internet access. You may obtain applications by calling 515-725-6147. Once you receive the applications from the state, completed forms should be returned with payment via fax or standard mail. At iowaelectrical.gov you can also find a list of frequently asked questions and more detailed information on the electrical inspection program for the state of Iowa.

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